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Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The current political landscape is not so encouraging as to allow us to expect significant advances in disarmament. Perhaps that has always been the case, otherwise we would not have spent more than a century discussing this issue. The international community is now facing serious threats to its security and needs to provide serious answers. Such threats, be they of a terrorist, technological, nuclear, bacteriological or chemical nature, put the existing multilateral structure to the test. We must strengthen that structure rather than simply being passive observers, because by using the excuse that no disarmament instrument is yet universal, that the level of implementation is still unsatisfactory or that under current conditions some of those instruments have become irrelevant, we are becoming mere observers of a weakening of the multilateral structures that we ourselves created.

Uruguay believes that in circumstances such as these, when dangerous unilateralist trends are appearing, it is more than ever necessary to strengthen the multilateral system. At a time when the entry into force of the main instruments is not yet in sight, when negotiations on disarmament remain at a stand-still, and when conventions have not yet become universal, that is when we most need to demonstrate a determination to protect multilateral structures.

Nuclear, biological, chemical, bacteriological, toxin and conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, all carry the potential for massive destruction, some of them by their very nature and others because of the quantities in which they proliferate illicitly. We define, catalogue, account for and register them with relative success. However, we continue to fail in our main objective, which is to eliminate them altogether or to limit them.

In recent decades we have established a system designed to regulate arms control and disarmament. While it is insufficient, and while it has been weakened by the deterioration in the international situation, we believe, nevertheless, that the integrity and authority of the system must be preserved, improved and expanded. To that end, and subscribing to what was stated by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group and without prejudice to statements on specific issues that will be made in due course by the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), Uruguay wishes to stress the following.

First, we believe that maintaining and enhancing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of the denuclearization of our planet. Hence, it is necessary to stress the universalization of the NPT on the one hand and strict compliance with its regulations on the other. We are particularly pleased by the announcement made by Cuba regarding its accession to that Treaty and to

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the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). We would also like to call for the full implementation of the 13 nuclear disarmament measures that arose from the NPT Review Conference in 2000, since which time no substantive progress has been recorded.

Second, Uruguay is concerned by the difficulties regarding the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Although we trust that observance of the moratorium on testing will help, we believe that the effective entry into force of the Treaty should not be delayed.

Third, it is disappointing to see the stalemate — that has already existed for more than six years — in which the Conference on Disarmament (CD) finds itself, and the continued failure to initiate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would be a meaningful step towards non-proliferation and would also contribute directly to the prevention of nuclear terrorism.

Fourth, the serious consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons speaks for itself when observed in terms of the annual number of victims resulting from it: some 500,000. We reaffirm the importance of the Programme of Action adopted last year and hope that the international community will provide the necessary support for United Nations weapons-tracing efforts with a view to evaluating the feasibility of developing an instrument to prevent illicit trafficking.

Fifth, we support the universalization of a draft international code of conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and the convening of an international conference for its adoption. Uruguay believes that the proliferation of such weapons has become an increasingly serious threat.

Sixth, Uruguay reiterates the need to continue working to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the need to move forward on the draft protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). In that regard, we believe it is necessary to develop a broad-based strategy on this Convention. We regret that there has been no agreement on strengthening it.

Seventh, we believe that the Register of Conventional Arms, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, has proved to be an important element in the promotion of transparency in armaments, and we call for continued efforts to make it universal.

Finally, Uruguay hopes that the progress made through the Ottawa Convention will find an increasingly strong echo in the international community.

Uruguay, a member of the zone of peace established by MERCOSUR, a party to the Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and a party to the NPT, once again reiterates the importance it attaches to the issues that the Committee will be debating in the coming weeks. We stated at the beginning of this statement that existing threats are serious and therefore demand serious responses. Uruguay commits its political will to helping in this task.

My delegation is also extremely pleased, Sir, to work under your stewardship.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and to express the confidence that with your diplomatic skill and experience the Committee will conclude its work at this important juncture with success. I seize this opportunity also to express my special thanks to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his leadership and his dedication to promoting the cause of disarmament.

The current international situation is characterized by a reinvigorated global effort to review existing security doctrines in search of a new foundation for fostering peace and security. The prevalent international security paradigm has in fact proven incapable of providing a comprehensive understanding of the new developments in international affairs, much less of articulating appropriate responses to them. It is self-evident that security has become a much more complex and multifaceted issue. The traditional zero-sum approach to security, which ultimately prescribes the enhancement of one security at the expense of others, seems to be a concept of the past. In a globalized and interconnected world of

common threats and common vulnerabilities, security can no longer be attained without considering the interests of all, and without cooperation among all, based on the principle of the equal right of all to peace and security.

The new threats to national, regional and even international security emanating from non-State actors have shattered traditional security perceptions and calculations. Yet the response — in terms of exacerbated recourse to unilateralism, a greater reliance on military hardware, the emergence of national security strategies founded on a new doctrine of pre-emption, and an unprecedented new nuclear posture — has further aggravated the situation. The emergence of a new phase in the international arena in fact requires a different perspective on world affairs.

September 11 illustrated the imperative of revising existing security doctrines, based on the acquisition of huge arsenals of weaponry, including nuclear weapons, as claimed means of maintaining peace and stability. Weapons of mass destruction, once envisaged as guaranteeing the security of their possessors, are today more than ever a source of real concern and are dangerous tools in the hands of irresponsible entities. The nuclear-weapon States therefore have a moral and legal duty and obligation to pursue the total elimination of their stockpiles in order to open the way to a comprehensive global ban.

Today, nuclear weapons serve no purpose other than to antagonize and are in fact a persistent menace to international peace and security. Nuclear weapons continue to inhibit the genuine confidence that is so essential to reforming international relations and enhancing cooperation. The threats of nuclear arms will thus not be removed until and unless such weapons are eradicated and a nuclear-weapon-free world is established.

That is not just an ideal or utopian vision of our future; it is a serious demand of the world community, supported by sound political and legal assertions. The nuclear-weapon States are required and committed by obligations to pursue systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of their elimination. In this context the preservation of nuclear weaponry for future use not only questions the credibility of bilateral arms control efforts but ignites more dangers for security through their possible submission to accidents, misuse and terrorist attacks.

While complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament is our collective goal and commitment, the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be accorded high priority on the international agenda. It is a source of grave concern that the emergence of new doctrines based on pre-emption and enlarging the scope of the use of nuclear weapons, as defined in the Nuclear Posture Review, undermines the very foundations of the non-proliferation regime, with grave consequences for both the regional and the international security environment.

On the positive side I congratulate the Government of Cuba on its decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We sincerely hope that this initiative will serve as a further step towards the universality of the Treaty. I should also like to welcome the realization of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential instrument to consolidate nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Yet, impediments towards the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have aggravated tension in the region. The States in the region have continually expressed their serious concern over the well-documented Israeli pursuit and acquisition of a wide range of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. It is indeed ironic that a regime that has posed the gravest danger to regional and international peace and security for decades has rejected and violated every single resolution of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, and has flouted all international regimes on weapons of mass destruction, has received not only the acquiescence of, but also material support for its weapons of mass destruction programme from, the very State that has made the levelling of baseless allegations against others a priority of its global policy. Even more ironic is the fact that Israel itself has been an active source of misinformation and propaganda about others. It is thus absolutely essential for the international community actively to pursue the implementation of a 30-year-old decision of the General Assembly on the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Individual and collective efforts by nuclear-weapon States to reduce their arsenals with a view to

the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be complemented by a revitalization of nuclear disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, disarmament negotiations have faced severe setbacks, which in some important areas have undermined the decade-long endeavours of the international community to ban weapons of mass destruction.

Breaking the impasse in the negotiations on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which was blocked at the very final stage of conclusion and adoption, awaits good will and practical initiatives. The situation is more difficult to justify in an era that is overwhelmed by the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

The multilateral approach to international peace and security is the only viable option in the new international environment. The General Assembly has been identified with the strong and unanimous support of the international community for such a multilateral approach. We hope that this sentiment can be faithfully translated into proper, practical measures in the interest of revitalizing multilateral diplomacy. Last year the First Committee considered the matter and adopted a resolution in this regard. This year, with the expression of such an unprecedented commitment of States to the pivotal principle of multilateralism, a more comprehensive resolution is reasonably expected. Collective efforts are under way to work out a draft for consideration on the issue of the promotion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in the First Committee this year. I hope that this draft will create a new momentum for promoting multilateralism as the sole vehicle for the maintenance and strengthening of peace and security.

The issue of missiles has rightly attracted attention in the United Nations. A General Assembly resolution on missiles led to the establishment of a Panel of Governmental Experts to address the issue in all its aspects. We are happy that this Panel succeeded in preparing the first-ever United Nations report on this complex issue (A/57/229). I congratulate the Chairman and members of the Panel on their tireless efforts and on their commitment to conclude a substantive review on different aspects of missiles. The Chairman of the Panel, Ambassador Guerreiro of Brazil, had an important role in achieving consensus within the Panel, and I seize this opportunity to express my special thanks for his dedication and excellent leadership.

The report primarily conducted an overview of the evolution of missiles production and staged development and their existing capabilities. In this framework the report has enumerated missile characteristics within the technical and strategic purview which have made missiles a suitable choice for States in the military and civilian fields. Furthermore, the report outlined driving factors in the acquisition and development of missiles. Most importantly, it addressed issues related to various aspects of the relationship of missiles to weapons of mass destruction, conventional capabilities, technology transfer, military doctrines and confidence-building measures.

The report, however general, provides a sound basis for further work and prepares the ground for more detailed and action-oriented recommendations.

The tenth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms provides a useful opportunity to substantively review the overall operation of the Register and its effectiveness, as well as possible measures to strengthen this initiative.

One of the basic issues in the operating process of the Register is the misgivings of States with regard to full participation in the process. The founding fathers of the Register established through this framework a basis for the exchange of information on armaments as a contribution to openness and confidence in the military sphere. That notion is clearly underlined even in the title of the resolution, that is, "Transparency in armaments". Unfortunately, the implementation of the resolution and the operation of the Register have been narrowly interpreted by some, against the letter and spirit of the original resolution, as being limited to the seven categories of conventional arms, and all efforts to expand the scope of the Register into a broader context of information exchange, including on weapons of mass destruction, have faced opposition and rejection.

That is a sad experience which should be rectified in order to increase the efficiency and plausibility of the whole process. A decision to share information about nuclear arsenals, fissile materials and related technologies could provide an important impetus for the successful operation of the Register.

Macrodisarmament and microdisarmament are today indispensable aspects to achieving security. Less

reliance on weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, should be recognized as a key common denominator to advance and promote peace and security. The world today is smaller than ever and its security ever more indivisible. We hope that we can unite to prevent catastrophes arising from our unpreparedness to face the new security challenges to our common future.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): First may I also subscribe to the congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of chairman of the First Committee and express confidence that under your skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with the important issues on the Committee's agenda. I also extend my felicitations to other members of the Bureau.

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and also to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his tireless work on disarmament and international security issues and for his comprehensive statement before the Committee.

The terrorist acts in the United States a year ago demonstrated the fragility of the world we live in and the importance for all States to join their efforts to ensure security and stability. These barbaric acts should lead us to renew our adherence to the body of disarmament and arms control agreements. We believe that the international nature of contemporary threats and challenges requires multilateral efforts for their prevention.

In this regard I should like to refer to the statement by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, in which he listed positive and negative aspects in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. I am pleased to state that Kazakhstan is involved in most of the positive events. Among them is the agreement reached recently by the expert group in Samarkand on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, and the commitment to sign the treaty this year in Semipalatinsk. Kazakhstan, whose people have experienced the negative power of nuclear weapons, is convinced that this is an important event, not only for Central Asian countries but also for the United Nations, which has been involved in the process since 1997.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime. That is why Kazakhstan supports the consolidation of the status of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State, welcomes the recent announcement by the Government of Cuba on the ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and Brazil's initiative to join the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere in order to create a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons.

Kazakhstan appreciates the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which is the effective instrument in helping to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The Centre has been rendering its essential assistance to the five Central Asian States in their work on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

This year my country ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The total number of signatories has now reached 166, 94 of which have ratified the Treaty. It is a good sign of the support for this Treaty by the international community. Kazakhstan continues to make practical contributions to efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring of compliance with the CTBT. As one of the few States in the world that voluntarily relinquished their nuclear heritage, it believes that a prerequisite for an atmosphere of trust in modern international relations is the early entry into force of the CTBT. The maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is an essential process in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Having welcomed Cuba's decision to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we call on those other States still outside the Treaty to join without delay.

I will not go further into details of my country's input in the disarmament and non-proliferation areas. Clear evidence of this contribution is the full membership of Kazakhstan in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and other well-recognized international organizations. This year, we also joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which gives us another opportunity to participate in preventing the

establishment of new types of nuclear weapons and strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The latest events show us not only the importance of promoting the nuclear non-proliferation regime but also the necessity of preventing a destabilizing build-up of conventional weapons in some regions. Transparency in the field of the control and reduction of conventional arms provides a good basis for preventing an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, has provided information on a regular basis since 1992, and considers the Register to be the most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument.

Kazakhstan is also in favour of other transparency measures offered by the United Nations, such as the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, and is one of the co-sponsors of the relevant resolution of the First Committee. In this regard, while the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has not fully met the expectations of all countries, we reiterate our readiness to undertake all bilateral, regional and international cooperative actions to ensure its implementation.

As a contribution to this matter, in May this year the final regional OSCE Conference on the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Asia was held in Almaty. It was the first effort to identify problems of the illicit trafficking in small arms in Central Asia through an information exchange. The Conference was attended by experts and representatives from the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Finland, Norway, Canada, and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

I avail myself of this opportunity also to reiterate the willingness of my country, as was voiced by the Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement during the general debate of this fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to host in Kazakhstan in the year 2003 an international conference on this subject under the auspices of the United Nations.

A half year after Kazakhstan joined the United Nations at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, put forward an initiative on convening a conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia aimed at the creation of a security system in Asia. That goal was advanced by the first summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which convened in June this year in Almaty. For the first time ever, the heads of the major Asian States came together to express their political will and interest in a joint search for ways to strengthen peace and stability in the vast Asian region. The adoption of the final documents, the Almaty Act on the institutionalization of CICA and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations, is extraordinarily important as it represents a valuable attempt to contribute to regional and global security. In this regard we call on all interested States to continue their work to implement confidence-building measures in Asia.

Finally, I should like to support your wish expressed in the opening statement to see in our deliberations a new commitment to rekindle the spirit of multilateralism that is so vitally needed to address global threats. This may be our greatest challenge of all and we must not fail.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. Let me also avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful and incisive statement on various disarmament and international security issues.

The First Committee is meeting at a challenging and difficult time. While there have been some positive developments, we are in fact witnessing the weakening of the basic disarmament infrastructure and a crisis in multilateral disarmament endeavours. My delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States that led to the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. As an important milestone in limiting nuclear armaments, it has mandated a reduction of deployed nuclear weapons to between

1700 and 2200 over the next decade and has provided a new foundation for strategic relations between them. It is our expectation that they will continue their efforts towards the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

It is also gratifying to note that total global arms sales are at their lowest since 1997. Many developing countries have curtailed their expenditures on weapons, and the resources can now be utilized for socio-economic development. The number of signatures and ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has continued to increase. Likewise, we note the advances made with regard to the elimination of chemical weapons, along with an increase in the number of ratifications of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our commendation goes to Cuba for its decision to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and thereby further strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Equally notable is the agreement on the text of a draft treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, demonstrating an irreversible trend towards a nuclear-free world.

However, in the effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons, the picture is hardly encouraging. There is growing concern at the slow pace of progress towards achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. The situation has been further compounded by the updating of strategic doctrines which set out new rationales for the permanent retention of these weapons, a new generation of such weapons and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. My delegation has also noted with regret the unilateral abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), plans for a national missile defence, and the prospects of an arms race in outer space. These negative developments have led to a new, more disturbing strategic context.

Underlying this crisis, there has been no serious implementation of the commitments undertaken to achieve disarmament objectives. Meanwhile, we have witnessed the growing trend towards undermining multilateralism and multilateral legal commitments. Divergent strategic interests have contributed to a grave setback to disarmament efforts, including deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament, which has failed so far to agree on its programme of work. The consequences of failing to address these issues in their broader and deeper dimensions will be dangerous and counterproductive. Our ability and willingness to maintain the current arms control regime will suffer gravely, and the prospect for credible disarmament agreements in the future will be drastically diminished.

Hence, the unequivocal undertaking of the 2000 NPT Review Conference needs to be demonstrated without delay through an accelerated process of negotiations and the full implementation of the 13 practical steps to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. For Indonesia, their implementation constitutes a benchmark to determine progress in fulfilling nuclear disarmament obligations and must be based upon genuine disarmament, which requires codification, transparency, accountability and verification. In particular: the reduction of operational strategic systems, which pose the most imminent danger, will provide hope for progress in reducing, if not eliminating, nuclear dangers; the irreversibility of the dismantling of nuclear weapons should be an integral part of the disarmament process; and diminishing the future role of these weapons in security minimizes the risk of their use. This can be bolstered by unilateral measures which could lead to new frontiers in arms limitation by reinforcing bilateral agreements, reducing arsenals, and cutting non-strategic nuclear weapons and limiting weaponization. This would reflect restraint, enhance confidence and contribute to the objective of achieving the total abolition of nuclear armaments.

The problem of controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction has emerged as being more important today than at any time in the nuclear age. The rising spectre of these weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, being acquired and used by non-State actors is of concern to us all. They pose a particular danger to international stability, which no nation can deal with unilaterally. In this context, the early adoption of an international convention for the suppression of nuclear terrorism, which has been under consideration by the General Assembly, would be an important first step towards eliminating this threat. It should contain provisions to safeguard nuclear materials and to establish international control of all fissile materials that could be used to make new nuclear weapons, and should promote internationally agreed standards for all types of nuclear exports and imports. Such a convention would add significantly to existing legal norms such as the Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

As regards the Bangkok Treaty, States parties meant it to be their contribution to the strengthening of

security and to the maintenance of world peace and stability. As in the case of the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba Treaties, the Bangkok Treaty could become effective only with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been negotiating with them the terms of a Protocol to become an integral part of the Treaty. Some nuclear-weapon States, however, continue to have unresolved concerns. Negotiations are continuing, and it is hoped the nuclear Powers will ratify the Protocol in the foreseeable future so that the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone will become fully operative.

In the first effort by the United Nations to address the question of missiles in all its aspects, the report on a study by the Panel of Governmental Experts (A/57/229) has illuminated our understanding by discussing, inter alia, the existing situation and trends, past precedents, and missiles being the delivery means of choice for weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and for many conventional weapons, with implications at both regional and global levels. It also acknowledged the right of States to use space technology for peaceful purposes. The report noted the lack of universally accepted norms or instruments to deal specifically with missile-related concerns. That anomaly has been addressed in part by the proposed global control system and the draft international code of conduct, focusing primarily on the key issue of stemming missile proliferation and related technologies. They reflect a response to the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

However, the lacunae in the non-proliferation regimes have made us realize the need to take a collective look at this issue and explore other modalities to combat the danger of missile proliferation. Multilateral initiatives under United Nations auspices for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory legal regime will not only address proliferation concerns and questions relating to dual-use technology, but also adopt a phased approach to reduce and eliminate both offensive and defensive missiles. The international community now has an unprecedented opportunity to seek a responsible outcome by building further on the report of the Panel of Experts.

Of the numerous global problems requiring a multilateral response, few can be as obvious as disarmament. In view of the deadlock that has persisted in our endeavours, we believe that the time has come to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). It is now nearly a decade and a half since SSOD-III was convened. It is also pertinent to recall that the Disarmament Commission considered this question exhaustively during an unprecedented four consecutive years and identified the essential elements for further elaboration. That reflects the importance that an overwhelming majority of States attach to its convening. My delegation is, therefore, hopeful that SSOD-IV can be convened so that we can build on our past achievements and come to grips with the myriad of issues that have for so long eluded consensus.

My delegation wishes to inform member States that a seminar in Bali will be held in February 2003 to consider the implementation, at the regional level, of the Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Concurrently, that forum will also hold a workshop on transparency in armaments.

Before concluding, my delegation wishes to commend the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its contributions to facilitating the exploration of new vistas, delineating areas for negotiations and agreements, and thereby strengthening the prospects for disarmament. For these reasons, it is essential that the activities of the Centre be continued.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I should like to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, our most earnest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. You may count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation in carrying out your noble task. I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. André Erdös of Hungary for the outstanding manner in which he led our work at the fifty-sixth session.

General disarmament is the final objective to be achieved in order to have collective security. The maintenance of international peace and security will remain a dream as long as States do not achieve a significant reduction in the number and quality of armaments they have available to them for their internal security. Indeed, by limiting numbers of troops

and reducing armaments the risks of aggression diminish.

From the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, created in 1959, to the Conference on Disarmament, the progress achieved has been slow. Several agreements on arms control and disarmament have not been ratified by States that, however, signed them willingly. The Haitian delegation regrets that the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament has not been able at its 2002 session to agree on a work plan pertaining to substantive matters. In the interests of collective peace and security it is essential that we overcome these obstacles, in spite of differences of view.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, my delegation welcomes the signing, on 24 May 2002, by the United States of America and the Russian Federation of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. This is a positive step in the right direction and we hope that the process of destroying these arms, as planned within the framework of this Treaty, will become verifiable and irreversible, for the new architecture of international peace and security calls for a treaty for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In this connection my delegation welcomes the decision of the Cuban Government to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. By this decision the Cuban authorities are confirming their firm dedication to nuclear disarmament and their faith in multilateralism, which today is in full crisis.

The NPT is a necessary instrument for the campaign of the international community against armaments and in favour of non-proliferation. Indeed, non-proliferation and disarmament are integrally linked. Therefore, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones plays a crucial role in the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. The Haitian delegation welcomes the establishment of such zones through the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The Republic of Haiti, which is a party to the NPT, also signed in Vienna on 10 July 2002 the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol on Safeguards. That agreement, as well as the Additional Protocol, will be ratified soon by the Haitian Parliament. Even though Haiti does not have or make use of fissile materials, such as uranium or plutonium, the fact remains that the ratification of these legal instruments will demonstrate to the international community the extent to which the Haitian Government shares its objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. On behalf of the Haitian Government I should like to thank publicly the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the assistance given to the Republic of Haiti for almost two years now in the civilian use of nuclear energy.

The Haitian delegation joins those which call for a complete ban on nuclear testing. In this connection, we welcome the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by a growing number of States — 94 at present — and especially the impressive system of international monitoring set up in order to detect and deter any nuclear testing. We express the ardent hope that the moratorium on testing will remain, pending the entry into force of this Treaty.

The Republic of Haiti is in favour of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, condemned by General Assembly resolution 56/1 and Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), it is more urgent than ever to deal with this issue and recognize the close connection between international terrorism and the illegal movement of these weapons of mass destruction. Having said that, my delegation remains convinced that biological and chemical weapons represent a genuine threat to international peace and security. Enough progress has been achieved in the area of biotechnology and genetics to give us an idea of the danger awaiting humankind if it does not obtain multilateral instruments to struggle against the proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery.

In this regard the Republic of Haiti welcomes the appeal made by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for biological disarmament and encourages the Biological and Toxin Weapons Review Conference to reconcile the interests and differences of view in order to strengthen the Convention. Moreover, we welcome the progress made in order to achieve the elimination of chemical weapons within the framework of the Convention and we can only praise the efforts of the Organization which, since the entry into force of that Convention in 1997, is working actively towards

the implementation of these forecasts. However, like the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), my delegation is still concerned about the quantity of these arms that are stockpiled and the military arsenals and expresses its concern that the Organization was only able to carry out 70 per cent of its programme of inspection last year for lack of funds.

In an introductory statement made on 30 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala — to whom my delegation would like to pay a well-deserved tribute — reminded us that 639 million light weapons remain throughout the world. These weapons, which are cheap and easily transportable, are causing the deaths of 500,000 people a year; controlling their proliferation is becoming increasingly necessary. Indeed, since 1990, small arms and light weapons are the tools that fuel conflicts, threaten civilian populations, and destabilize young economies and democracies. Africa has suffered a great deal from this. It is with satisfaction that my delegation welcomed the July 2001 Conference held here in New York, and the implementation of its Programme of Action can only help to predict, combat and eradicate the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in arms.

With this in view we should encourage the important initiatives adopted at the regional and subregional level in order to combat this devastating scourge, especially the Inter-American Convention of 1997, the Brasilia Declaration of November 2000 and the Common Position formulated by the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in December 2000, to cite only a few.

Military expenditures are now estimated to be more than $850 billion. The policy of nuclear deterrence or of military superiority still remains. These colossal sums are taken from national budgets in the name of national defence, peace and international security. To be viable, all this security should rest on two pillars, namely, the socio-economic progress of peoples and the development of a culture of peace. The latest report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on human development states that the objectives of the millennium could be achieved if official development assistance increased by approximately $50 billion in a sustained manner. Overarming does not foster development, nor does it guarantee international peace and security.

Before concluding, my delegation would be remiss if it did not welcome Switzerland and Timor-Leste, new Members of the Organization. We also wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to hail the courage of civil society and non-governmental organizations also concerned by the arms race.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to say on behalf of my delegation and myself how very pleased we are to see you, Sir, presiding over the Committee. Your experience in disarmament matters and well-known skills are a good omen for the success of our work. We would also like to praise your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdös, whose work at the helm of the Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly was unanimously appreciated. Finally, we wish to say how grateful we are to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement and technical details.

The end of the cold war might have led us to believe that we were close to a final settlement of the question of disarmament. Regrettably, that is not the case. On the contrary, and paradoxically, the unipolarity that has stemmed from this phenomenon seems to have meant the possibility of a greater striking force, including nuclear force, since the collapse of the Berlin wall. The club of countries possessing nuclear weapons has grown dangerously rather than decreased, so that current realities cannot dispel our fears. Indeed, the hopes that arose from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) have vanished with the unilateral withdrawal of one of the parties.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

Burkina Faso would however like to say that it is pleased at the signing between the Russian Federation and the United States on 24 May 2002 of a treaty under which they are contemplating a one-third reduction in their nuclear arsenals by 2012. The process of implementing the START treaty is stuck, as is that of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That is true also of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite the decisions adopted at the 2000 Review Conference. As to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), it has been marking time for several years and has still to adopt an agenda that would make it possible for its work to begin again effectively.

With regard to this question, we had earlier expressed regret about the negative influences that limited the scope of the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects but we have to work to ensure effective implementation of the actions identified by the Conference. As we can see, the overall situation is not very encouraging. A great deal remains to be done and the United Nations must redouble its efforts. In this regard, like other countries, Burkina Faso has supported the goals of general and complete disarmament under international control. That objective will be pursued on the basis of a well-balanced approach, together with the appropriate measures. However, it is crystal clear that these initiatives for general and complete disarmament cannot be successful unless there is a calm international climate imbued with trust, in other words, an environment that is respectful of the obligations stemming from international agreements and arrangements. This calm, we must stress and deplore, is far from having been achieved in the current international situation, particularly since there are several other aspects of disarmament that have yet to be resolved and are of grave concern.

Thus, when it comes to small arms and light weapons and their proliferation, despite measures adopted by Governments, there is a recurrence of this phenomenon, particularly in Africa, which threatens the very stability of the continent. Among solutions that could be advocated to remedy this negative trend there is the absolute need to strengthen the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, particularly the Centre in Togo which covers the West African region. We welcome the creation of such centres, the usefulness of which is widely recognized but which unfortunately are having some difficulty in functioning because of a lack of resources. Thus we urge the international community to provide them with the necessities they require.

In conclusion, Burkina Faso will continue at all times to take part in United Nations efforts in the context of measures to resolve the question of disarmament. Internally, already measures have been taken to harmonize our national legislation with those treaties to which Burkina Faso is a party. Burkina Faso remains convinced that only true transparency in the area of armaments and a united and collective effort by the international community will lead to general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation congratulates the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and expresses its conviction that under his able guidance substantial progress will be achieved in the deliberations on the agenda items before the Committee.

It is the desire of all humankind to make the twenty-first century a century of peace and stability by realizing disarmament. However, the disarmament foundations established as the result of enormous efforts on the part of international society over several decades are being threatened. Theories on nuclear supremacy and a nuclear pre-emptive strike, attempts to build a missile defence system and to deploy nuclear weapons in outer space, and other actions in the pursuit of a global strategy based on strength render the bilateral and multilateral disarmament agreements ineffective and invalid.

The qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of sophisticated weapons are openly conducted; the commitments so far made for the abolition of nuclear weapons serve no purpose at all; and fears are increasing that the arms race of the cold war might be revisited. Fairness is further forced to be silent in international relations. Discussions and debates on disarmament in United Nations forums cannot be said to be fully impartial, objective and substantive, and do not address real threats and challenges to world peace and security. There are more unrealistic requests on sidelined issues. Disarmament deliberations will continue to be unproductive as long as delegations fumble with tiny branches while avoiding the main stems and roots.

In order to achieve lasting world peace and security in the new century, nuclear disarmament should be realized and our planet denuclearized. The major threat and challenge to world peace and security today is power politics, based on the absolute supremacy of nuclear weapons. This is demonstrated by the recent shift from the nuclear deterrence theory to a pre-emptive strike philosophy and the open clamour of nuclear threats. As long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, humankind can never be free from nuclear threats.

The core issue of disarmament is nuclear disarmament, and the disarmament process can properly proceed only when nuclear disarmament is achieved. That includes, inter alia, the prohibition and total elimination of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this regard my delegation favours the early conclusion of an international agreement which clearly indicates the obligations of all nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States on the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and the complete destruction of all nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, precedence should be given to implementing assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons deployed outside the territories of nuclear-weapon States, thus removing the nuclear threat and promoting the nuclear disarmament process.

My delegation is of the view that a future international legal agreement on preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects would serve the global goal of preventing the weaponization of outer space. Disarmament cannot be unilateral but should be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and trust among States. Real disarmament can never be expected in an environment characterized by continued hostile relations between States, increased threats to sovereignty, stigmatizing member States as evil and calling for pre-emptive strikes. Furthermore it is not reasonable for any country, deploying abroad huge armed forces and weapons of mass destruction, to insist that other countries reduce their self-defensive forces. My delegation considers it urgent to convene a United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers and adopting an effective action programme for comprehensive disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains a major concern for world peace and security. The Korean goal is to terminate foreign interference and realize the reunification of the country. The great leader of our people, General Kim Jong-il, has opened a new chapter in the history of North-South relations, advocating national independence and great national unity in order to bring an early peace and reunification of the country. He also provides a favourable environment for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula with his energetic external activities. The historic inter-Korean summit meeting that took place in Pyongyang in June 2000, the first of its kind in the history of national division, and the adoption of the North-South Joint Declaration, serve as a turning point in the efforts of the Korean people for the reunification of the country.

The North-South Joint Declaration is a declaration of national independence and peaceful reunification, calling for opposition to foreign interference and achieving reunification by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation. Though there have been temporary obstacles in the implementation of the North-South Joint Declaration, due to external intervention and the lack of a national independent spirit, North-South relations are now taking big steps forward, supported by our magnanimity for country and nation. Substantial cooperation and exchanges are being undertaken in various fields, and recently ground-breaking ceremonies have taken place for reconnecting railways and roads between the North and the South of Korea.

Respected General Kim Jong-il held a meeting with President Putin in the far eastern region of the Russian Federation in August this year; and had talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan in Pyongyang on 17 September, signing the Pyongyang Declaration between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan. These meetings constitute a great contribution to world peace and security and to the creation of a new and just world structure. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will discharge in good faith its duty and responsibility to achieve peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, and to ensure peace and stability in North-East Asia and the world, under the wise leadership of respected General Kim Jong-il.

If peace and reunification are to be achieved on the Korean Peninsula, the North and the South of Korea should reject foreign interference and hold to the spirit of national independence. Recourse to foreign forces and complicity with them against fellow countrymen render impossible the development of North-South relations in the interests of the Korean nation and the realization of peace and reunification. In order to do away with a dependence on foreign forces, the withdrawal of foreign troops should be called for. South Korea protects the stationing of foreign forces targeted at fellow countrymen, and does not exercise

any jurisdiction over the crimes committed by foreign soldiers who, as in one case recently, killed two South Korean female students. It is indeed not in a position to speak about issues of peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to urge South Korea to abandon its reliance on foreign forces and to adhere to a spirit of national independence. That is essential for promoting peace and reunification in Korea in line with the spirit of the North-South Joint Declaration.

In order to ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and realize reunification, the hostile policy of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be abolished. Peace and security in Korea and North-East Asia can be expected when the United States terminates its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, respects our system and sovereignty, and develops relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

If the United States renounces its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and implements in good faith the Agreed Framework for the proper construction of the light water reactors, the issue of safeguards will be resolved accordingly. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea holds to the position of readjusting and developing relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America in the new century. The need to do so stems from the negative policy of the present United States Administration towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which states that the United States has security concerns with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If the United States Administration is willing to abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will address, through dialogue, the security issues of concern to the United States. From that standpoint we are following the visit of the special envoy of the United States President who is now in Pyongyang.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): I wish to congratulate the Chairman on his well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and express my delegation's full confidence in his leadership. Warm felicitations are also due to the other members of the Bureau. I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor for the successful conclusion of the fifty-sixth session.

We commend the Secretary-General for his consistent attempts to promote disarmament and peace. Let me also thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive opening remarks earlier in the general debate.

The past year has been a mixed bag of advances and setbacks in the field of disarmament. Progress in reducing the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has been accompanied by the tremendous refinement of horrible weapons technologies and the undermining of existing international treaties. The balance sheet has, however, tilted more to the negative side, a fact which hardly bodes well for the global community. Efforts, therefore, are critical to quicken the pace of disarmament in order to realize the purpose of the United Nations Charter and the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

Nepal is a persistent supporter of disarmament as a means of promoting international peace and security, and nuclear disarmament remains at the top of our priorities. World peace must be based on mutual trust and respect, not on the threat of mutual annihilation. We welcome the United States — Russian Federation agreement to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons. At the same time, we believe that the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has long been a factor of stability, will open the door to a new arms race, which is likely to be much more dangerous than ever before. The ultimate security from nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination. We therefore urge all declared and undeclared nuclear Powers to show commitment and resolve to get rid of their nuclear arsenals within a technically feasible time frame.

Many States have never harboured a nuclear ambition, and many others have shunned that option out of conscience. We applaud Cuba for joining the category of such nations by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. But some have sought these weapons overtly or covertly, undermining the objective of the NPT and the larger goal of complete nuclear disarmament. This tendency is unlikely to be reversed unless nuclear weapons are delegitimized, and unless

the nuclear Powers make concrete advances towards eradicating these horrendous arms from their arsenals. To cling to such deadly weapons themselves, while asking others to forgo the nuclear weapon option, would be a patent example of the double standard, which nuclear Powers must avoid.

At a time when progress in the actual reduction of nuclear arms has been disheartening, measures to build confidence and to curb the further growth and proliferation of such weapons have stalled or have been disappointingly slow. For example, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has yet to come into force since it lacks sufficient ratifications. Negotiations on the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, which should be pursued with a sense of urgency, have not gotten off the ground. Governments on their own and on a regional basis have been attempting to rid their countries and regions of nuclear weapons, which is very encouraging. In this context, my delegation welcomes the endeavour of Central Asian countries to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and on the South Asian rival countries not to rattle their nuclear sabres.

The guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons can be a potent confidence-building measure, both as an interim step and as an incentive for the attainment of total nuclear disarmament, which is our ultimate goal. Other weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and biological weapons, should have no place in a civilized world. Sadly, the faltering of negotiations on the proposed protocol on the Biological Weapons Convention does not bode well, but we hope the resumed review conference on this Convention will be able to achieve its objective.

The effective enforcement of the various disarmament treaties has always been problematic. In this context we call on Iraq to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions and allow the inspectors back in. We also call on the global community to respect the United Nations Charter in its actions, while implementing the provisions of international law.

Though meagre in its recommendations, the consensus of governmental experts on the issue of missiles is encouraging, as it will afford a basis on which to establish multilateral norms in this respect. Nepal, opposed as it is to anti-personnel landmines, has actively participated in the evolution of the Convention to control them, and our moral commitment to the Convention remains strong. The text of the instrument is under the active consideration of His Majesty's Government, and when the process is completed, we will be very happy to join the ranks of those nations that have the privilege of becoming parties to this very important global Treaty.

It would be outrageous to cast the dark shadow of a terrible arms race on outer space, the seabed and Antarctica. Nepal opposes any effort to weaponize these very sensitive areas. A victim of Maoist terrorism for half a decade, Nepal has witnessed how terrorists snatch small arms away from civilians and turn them brutally against innocent people. Our commitment to implement the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, therefore, is full, and our call to strengthen global measures to keep these arms from non-State actors is strong.

While overall progress in disarmament is rather slow, what dismays us most is that the Conference on Disarmament could not even agree on its programme of work over the course of four successive sessions. Moreover, the Disarmament Commission did not meet at its last scheduled session. These are matters of serious disappointment for us. We call on the world community to put these multilateral mechanisms to their best use.

Regional centres for peace and disarmament are an important tool to promote the goals of disarmament and peace. Nepal is grateful to Member States for the honour they have conferred by designating it as host for the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific. I wish to reaffirm the abiding and resolute commitment of His Majesty's Government to transfer the Centre to where it belongs, that is, to Nepal, as soon as possible. For this, His Majesty's Government has already decided to contribute the operational costs of the Centre when it is relocated to Kathmandu. We seek the continued moral and material support of Member States in moving the Centre to Nepal and in further strengthening its activities.

Deadly weapons may bring uneasy stability founded in fear, but they will not ensure durable peace erected on the pillars of mutual trust, understanding and interdependence. All strategic doctrines experimented with so far, from the balance of power to

mutually assured destruction, have failed to offer such peace. Nepal therefore sees no alternative to a culture of peace, where disputes are resolved peacefully before they flare up, and where human dignity is valued. We view disarmament as an integral part of the culture of peace in that resources released from deep cuts in military and arms expenditures could be diverted to development in order to lift billions of people from poverty, illiteracy and disease around the globe. The peace dividend must be a tangible reality, not an abstract notion. What we need for durable peace and security are more bridges between peoples and nations, not more bombs.

The Chairman: That concludes the list of speakers for this morning. I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): In order not to diminish the importance of congratulating the Chairman on his assumption of the chairmanship, official congratulations will come later in the debate from the head of my delegation.

I also wish to thank the Syrian and Iranian representatives who, with their baseless allegations and toxic rhetoric, have afforded me the opportunity to set the record straight.

It is not my intention to refer to the delusional fantasy offered by these delegations in their statements. Our positions on arms control and security issues, as well as our support for the eventual establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, will be described at length in our statement during the general debate of the Committee. Suffice it to say that listening to such allegations against my country from countries that are notorious for their repression and totalitarianism, lacking even the most basic respect for human rights and the rule of law, is offensive in the extreme.

We have heard in the course of this debate several references to a so-called double standard. A clear distinction must be made between a democracy, my country, the only democracy in the Middle East, a country that has fought for its existence from the moment of its establishment, and the countries I have just described. For more than five decades, Israel has dealt with threats from neighbouring countries, some of which have long histories of tyranny, repression and totalitarianism, and lack even the most basic respect for human rights and the rule of law. Nothing prevents these regimes from employing the most brutal methods to maintain their power. Some have even used weapons of mass destruction, not only against their neighbours, but also against their own people. In this regard it is worth mentioning that only yesterday, Iran revealed the true objective of its missile programme, which is aimed at no other State than Israel. That is probably its manifestation of a culture of peace.

In his statement, the Syrian representative has revealed his overriding motivation to try to legitimize terrorism by making a distinction that may justify violence against civilians. This comes to us as no surprise in light of the fact that Syria is listed as a State sponsor of terrorism. That is made even more disturbing by the fact that this country is a member of the Security Council and has even served as its President.

There can be no acceptance for those who seek to justify the deliberate taking of innocent civilian lives, regardless of cause or grievances. Terrorism must be condemned without equivocation and without distinction. If we are to be successful in our campaign to rid the world of this scourge, States must undertake to stop all moral or logistical support for acts of terrorism. But that would be an act of moral and legal principle and an outgrowth of basic respect for humanity and the sanctity of human life. That, I do not expect, will be forthcoming from those delegations, and especially not from Syria.

Mr. Al-Matoq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We hope that his work will be crowned with success.

I have a very simple reply to the representative of Nepal, who said that Iraq should comply with Security Council resolutions. I believe that the delegation of Nepal does not have a full picture of the situation, because Iraq is in fact complying with all Security Council resolutions. Iraq has invited the inspectors to come to its territory to see what we are doing with respect to weapons of mass destruction. The position of Iraq is clear-cut in this regard. However, the United States has opposed the return of the inspectors to Iraq.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to respond briefly to the statement made by the representative of Israel. The representative of Israel has tried, as usual, to divert the attention of

the Committee. He made a statement that had nothing to do with the maintenance of international peace and security. He alleged that Syria is waging a malicious campaign, but what Syria said yesterday was simply a statement of facts. Syria, like other Arab and Islamic countries, has called for the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region. It has called upon Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to submit its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

These are not propaganda campaigns. Our call is based on the premise that Syria in particular and Arab countries in general have chosen peace and aspire to peace in the region in order to spare it the scourge of total, unending war. Israel has been killing the peace process since the beginning, from Madrid to the Arab peace initiative that was adopted at the Beirut Summit in March of this year. Israel has killed the peace process with its tanks, its fighter jets and its heavy and light weaponry.

The heinous massacres committed by Israel are a case in point. If the representative of Israel wishes to speak about terrorism, then I would say that Israel is the only country in the region, or in the world, that practises systematic State terrorism against a people strenuously struggling for liberation, independence and self-determination. By this intervention, I wanted to make sure that other delegations do not fall for the distortions that Israel has tried to promote.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): I promise that I will not use the entire time granted to me for my second right of reply. I have listened very carefully to the right of reply by the Syrian representative, and I have to say that the audacity of the Syrian representative knows no bounds. Despite its protestations, the true nature of Syria's record is no secret. Syria has transferred small arms and light weapons and has provided other means of support to Hizbullah terrorists who continue to destabilize the northern part of Israel. Moreover, Syria, as I mentioned earlier, is one of only seven States listed as State sponsors of terrorism, as a consequence of the support and safe haven it provides to terrorist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, Abu Moussa Fatah al-Intifadah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Hammas, one of the most deadly Palestinian terrorist organizations, which constantly opposes the peace process and has no limits on the means it uses, maintains offices in Damascus and enjoys basing privileges in Lebanon's Bekaa valley under Syrian control. Syrian contempt for the sanctity of human life does not begin at its borders. The regime has used the most brutal and murderous tactics to suppress dissent and silence political opposition at home.

A country with as shameful a record as Syria has no right to accuse others. I would have hoped that a country so completely at odds with the international campaign against terrorism would have hesitated to speak in this manner. The Syrian representative would be well served to heed the warning that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. Chung Eui-young (Republic of Korea): I should like to exercise my right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in which he said the recent accident of two young females being killed by United States soldiers was linked to the Korean Government's dependence on foreign military strength.

Let me make three points: first, the stationing of United States forces in Korea accords with our mutual security treaty with the United States, which was signed because of the constant threat of military conflict on the Korean peninsula.

Secondly, the killing of two young girls by United States soldiers in Korea was an unfortunate accident that we believe has nothing to do with the security situation in Korea or with my Government's security policies. The incident is being fully investigated by the authorities of my Government and by the United States forces in Korea, and we believe that there will be appropriate compensation and punishment based upon the outcome of the investigation, in accordance with the status of forces agreement between my Government and the United States.

Thirdly, since the historic summit between the two leaders of the North and the South of the Korean peninsula we have been making impressive progress in inter-Korean relations, and we hope that this trend will eventually contribute to a lessening of the tension on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for speaking once again. I reiterate that the representative of Israel was out of order when

he raised issues irrelevant to our work. Furthermore, I have to confess that I have not read or heard anywhere of a democratic occupation. Israel is an occupying Power. While it claims to be democratic, Israel destroys and kills Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories; it still occupies the Syrian Golan and has not yet completely withdrawn its forces from Lebanon.

What is truly astonishing is that this State, which claims to be democratic, denies the Palestinians the right to live within an internationally recognized and secure State. Israel should be the last State to talk about democracy.

In his first intervention, the representative of Israel noted that Syria was a member of the Security Council and had become the President of the Security Council. Syria has been known throughout its membership of the United Nations as having committed itself to resolutions of international legitimacy and to implementing United Nations resolutions. The representative of Israel has no right to evaluate Syria's work at the United Nations. We did not need Israel's vote to become a member of the Security Council.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Israel referred to my country in his second statement. I should thus like to exercise my right of reply. The representative of Israel stated that his State was subjected to threats from its neighbours, as if trying to justify Israel's violations of the Assembly's resolutions, adopted on the recommendations of this Committee, that urge Israel to eliminate its nuclear weapons and its other weapons of mass destruction.

I should like once again to refer to the outcome of the Beirut Summit and to the Arab peace initiative. That initiative gives Israel, in exchange for a complete withdrawal from occupied Arab territories, the right to exist. It is not true, as the representative of Israel stated, that the Arabs threaten Israel. It is the occupying Power that poses a threat. In exchange for the right to exist, the Arab States are asking Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. The Arab States have also assured Israel that they would establish normal relations with that country, something not found in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is not true that the Arabs are today threatening Israel. Israel is the occupying Power that is threatening Arab States, or at least neighbouring Arab States.

In the same statement, the representative of Israel described Lebanese resistance as terrorism. The representative of Israel simply labels as terrorists those who resist in order to free their lands. In Israel's view, Charles de Gaulle, for example, would have been the terrorist *par excellence* because he fought to free his lands from occupation. There is a major difference between resistance and terrorism, as is affirmed by General Assembly resolutions. The representative of Israel should be the last person to make such accusations.

The meeting rose at noon.